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## Fresh arugula inspires pasta dish

**By Ron Mikulak**

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A nice bunch of young arugula came in The Courier-Journal's first Community Supported Agriculture box from Grasshoppers Distributing, along with some elegantly slender green garlic, which is the inspiration for this recipe.

Arugula is an ancient vegetable much and long admired in Europe that only in recent decades has been gaining popularity in the United States. There is something either amusing or intimidating in its name: ah-ROO-goo-la -- and you can draw out that second syllable, as Dame Edith Everidge did in her show here a few years back, "arooooogoolaa," to try to sound funny.

Also called rocket, roquette, rucola or Italian cress, arugula is a sharp and somewhat bitter-tasting leaf, making it a bit of an acquired taste. I like bitterness in greens, when balanced with other flavors and textures, and sautéing arugula with sweet onion and mild green garlic in a fruity olive oil provides that balance.

I ate a dish similar to my version in Rome some years ago, made with spinach. You can use chard as well, or young mustard greens. For this dish I like orecchiette, a pasta shaped into a small, indented disc; that name means "little ear." The shape provides pleasant little resting places for the vegetable topping. But you can use bow ties (farfalle) or one of the spiral pastas (rotini or gemelli) as well.

## Pasta with arugula and green garlic

¼ cup olive oil

1 bunch of arugula, well washed and trimmed, and cut into thin ribbons (about 2 cups, when cut)

1 long shoot of green garlic, cut into ¼-inch thick rounds, or 2 cloves of garlic, peeled and minced

1 small onion, peeled and chopped

Salt and pepper to taste

1 pound orecchiette or other pasta shape

¼ to ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese

Heat the olive oil in a sauté pan until it is shimmery, and add the prepared arugula, green garlic and onion. Cook until the greens are wilted, and the garlic and onion are softened, 5 to 8 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Bring a 2-quart pot of salted water to a boil. Cook the pasta according to package directions.

When cooked al dente, drain well and place in a serving bowl. Add the cooked arugula mixture, and toss to coat the pasta well. Add about half the Parmesan cheese, and toss again. Serve in shallow bowls, passing additional Parmesan. Serve with a salad and crusty bread.

Serves 4.

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